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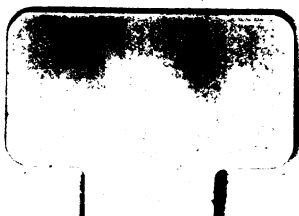
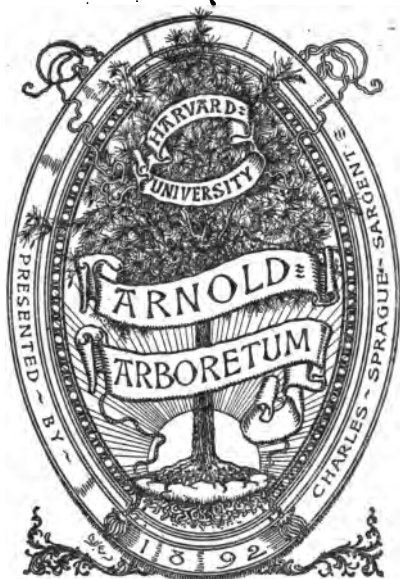
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A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF
THE WORSHIPFUL
COMPANY OF GARDENERS
OF LONDON.



#

A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF
THE WORSHIPFUL
COMPANY OF GARDENERS
OF LONDON.



By

CHARLES WELCH, F.S.A.,

Librarian of the Corporation of London.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

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1890.

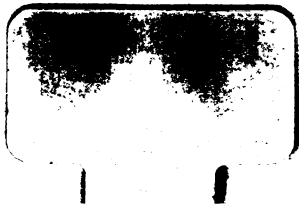
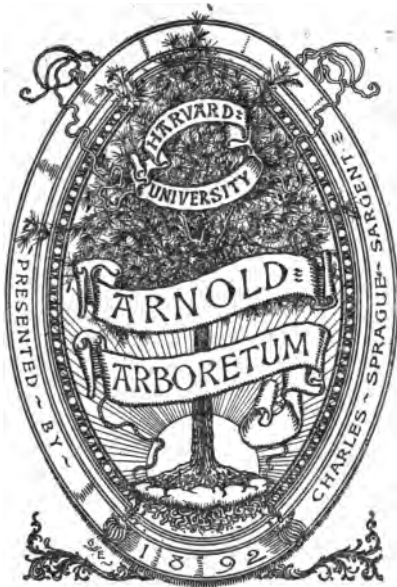
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THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GARDENERS OF LONDON.

LONDON has been noted for its gardens from very early times. Fitzstephen, a writer in Henry the Second's reign, says that the London citizens of his day had large and beautiful gardens surrounding their houses. An inquest was held in 1276, on one Adam Schot, who was killed by falling from a pear-tree which he was trying to climb to gather the fruit, in the garden of one Laurence, in the parish of St. Michael Paternosterchirche. The value of the pear-tree was fixed at five shillings, a large sum in those days. In the same year King Edward I

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to a freeman of the Company, and the number of each freeman's apprentices was also strictly limited.

The early records of the Corporation of London contain several references to the Company, and the *Liber Albus*, a compendium of City laws compiled by John Carpenter in 1419, mentions an ordinance passed in the early part of the reign of Edward III restricting gardeners to certain places within the City for the sale of their goods.

After existing for centuries as a mystery or fellowship, the Gardeners were at length incorporated into a Company by charter of 3 James I, 18th September, 1605, under the title of "The Master, Wardens, Assistants and Commonalty of the Company of Gardeners of London." Power was granted them to plead and be impleaded, to acquire and devise lands, to have a common seal, and to make ordinances for their government. On the 1st July, 1606, certain

ordinances for the government of the Company were approved and granted by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, and Lord Chief Justice.

Further privileges were obtained from the same monarch, by Letters Patent, in the 14th year of his reign, dated 9th November, 1616, in which the operations controlled by the Company are curiously set forth under its style or title of "the trade, craft, or misterie of Gardening, planting, grafting, setting, sowing, cutting, arboring, rocking, covering, fencing and removing of plants, herbs, seeds, fruits, trees, stocks, setts, and of contriving the contrivances of the same."

The preamble also states that certain persons who have taken upon themselves to practise the said trade have sold dead and corrupt plants, seeds, &c. For preventing these abuses the Company was authorized, among other powers granted to them, to search for

defective wares within the City of London and a radius of six miles, and the Clerk of the Market and other officials were enjoined "to be assisting to them."

The rights and privileges of the Company were also confirmed and enforced by a proclamation of King Charles I in the tenth year of his reign, 1635. The Ordinances above-mentioned of 1st July, 1606, grant a Livery to the Company, with power to the Court of Assistants to summon thereto any freeman of the Company whom they will, and to impose a penalty of 26s. 8d. for refusal.

No freeman was allowed to join another Company without consent of the Gardeners' Company under a penalty of 5*l*. Any Freeman becoming a journeyman, or working for a person not a member of the Company, was to be fined 10s. Quarterly courts were held which every freeman was obliged to attend. These began at the early hour of 8 a.m. in

summer, and 9 a.m. in winter; a fine of 4*d.* was imposed upon every late comer, and any one leaving the Court without permission was fined 2*s.* 6*d.*

Each Liveryman was required to come in his livery to the burial of any of the Livery, or their wives, within the City or six miles circuit, and was forbidden to leave before the rest, under a penalty of 3*s.* 4*d.* Penalties were also imposed upon Freemen for improper language addressed to the Master or Wardens (6*s.* 8*d.*), for disobedience to those officers (6*s.* 8*d.*), and for sitting in a Court or Common Hall "not in decent apparel" (3*s.* 4*d.*). Similar fines were inflicted upon Liverymen, who offended either in their apparel or behaviour.

The Company does not appear to have possessed a Hall. In the early part of Charles the First's reign they met at the Common Hall of the Company of Free Masons, for which they paid a rent of ten

pounds yearly. In the year of the Great Fire of London, 1666, they met at Joiners' Hall, paying for its use eight pounds a year. The governing body consists of the Master and two Wardens, who are elected annually on the Wednesday in Whitsun week, and ~~eighteen~~²⁴ other members of the Court of Assistants. The officers of the Company prescribed by King James's charter are a Clerk and a Beadle.

The following is the heraldic description of the Company's Armorial Bearings, as shewn on page .

Arms—The field a landscape, the base variegated with flowers; a man proper, vested round the loins with linen argent digging with a spade, all of the first.

Crest—On a wreath, a basket of fruit all proper.

Supporters—Two emblematical female figures, with cornucopiæ representing plenty. Motto—"In the sweat of thy browes shalt thou eate thy bread."

The following ancient oath is taken by all persons admitted to the freedom of the Company:—"You shall swear that you shall be true to our Sovereign Lady the Queen that now is, and to her heirs and successors; and to the Master and Wardens of the Mystery of Gardners of the City of London, and their successors you shall be obedient; their counsel lawful and honest you shall keep secret, and all the laws, ordinances and statutes made by the Master, Wardens and Assistants of the same Mystery touching your self you shall observe, fulfill and keep; so help you God, and by the contents of this Book. God save the Queen."

One glance at the inner life of this ancient guild, as shown in its entertainments, must bring to a close the story of its early days and doings. The Gardeners were accustomed to adjourn after their meetings for the transaction of the Company's business, to some neighbouring tavern where the evening was spent in convivial intercourse.

Among the different houses at which they met were the Dolphin in Lombard Street, the Woolpack, and the White Lion. At the latter hostelry, the Company regaled themselves, on the 10th January, 1693, with a frugal repast, of which the following bill has been preserved :—

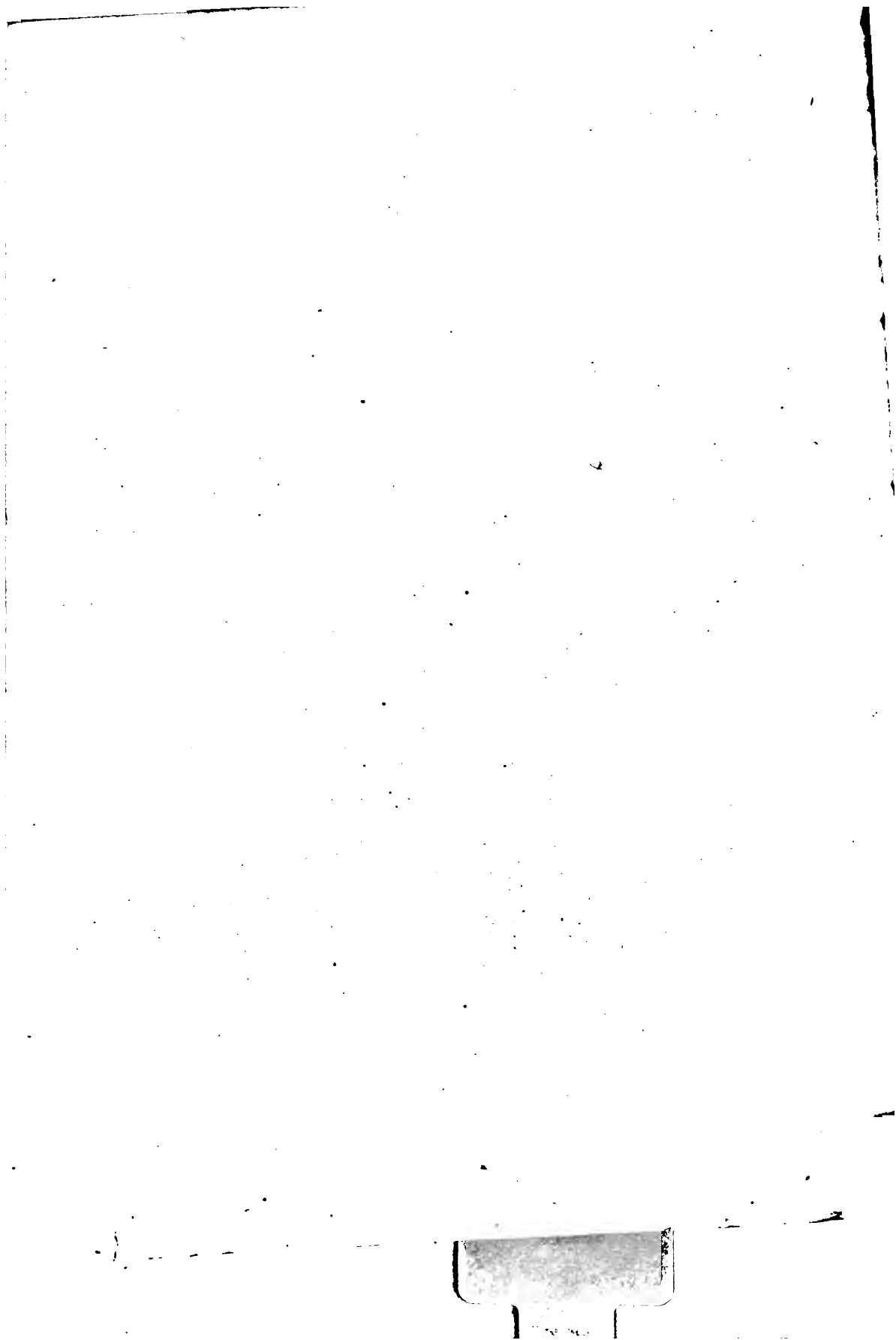
ffor Bear and Bred	-	-	-	-	1	11	10
ffor Wine	-	-	-	-	1	00	00
ffor firing	-	-	-	-	0	2	0
ffor Rosting a surline Beeff and vinegar					00	2	06
ffor 3 gees and mostart-	-	-	-	-		3	00
ffor shuguer in plats	-	-	-	-			6
ffor a side of lamb	-	-	-	-		8	00
ffor a Nick of uell [veal]	-	-	-	-		4	00
ffor Chees and botter	-	-	-	-		4	4
ffor lemones	-	-	-	-		1	6
ffor saleted met [salted meat]	-	-	-	-		1	6
ffor tabaco	-	-	-	-		2	00
ffor fouling lenin [linen]	-	-	-	-		4	00
					3	14	0
Laid out by Mr. Cadman Mr.							
for othor provisions over &							
above y ^e afores ^d charge	-				01	2	0
for all	-				04	16	0

Turning from the past with its prohibitions and penalties, which tended so much to cripple trade and industry, and prevent their free and natural development, we can point to the surer and more successful methods which find favour at the present day. The Gardeners' Company has long ceased to enforce their rights of control over the London members of the craft, but nevertheless has a wide sphere of usefulness in endeavouring to promote the best interests of the horticultural art by rewards and encouragement rather than by the repressive measures of a bygone age.

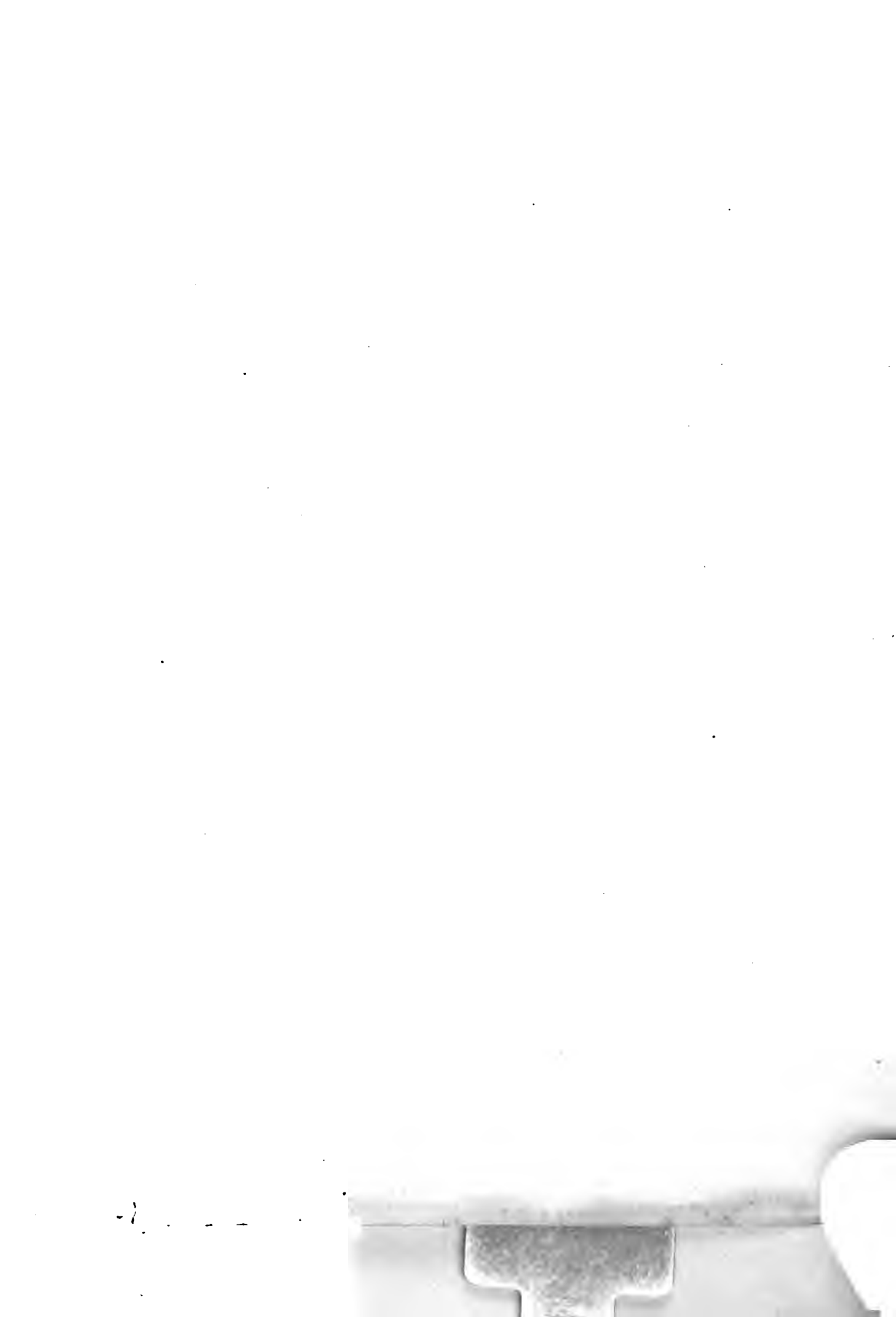
Science, the great handmaid of industry, has lent her powerful aid to the gardener's art, and chemistry, botany, biology, and especially the great principle of natural selection, have pointed out new and improved methods which have been followed with remarkable success.

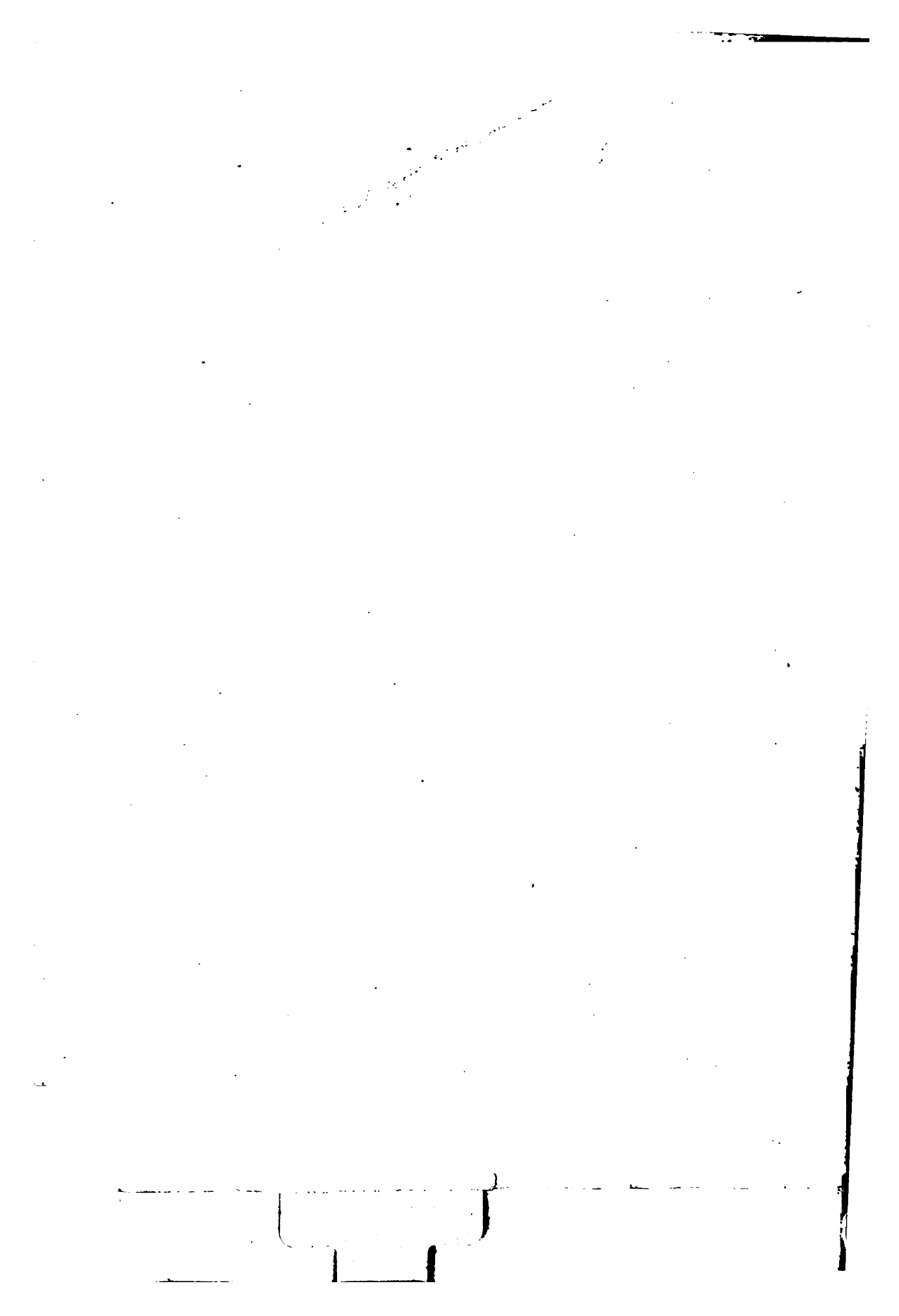
The holding of horticultural exhibitions and flower shows have also greatly contributed to this result, and there can be no doubt that still greater success in the future awaits further efforts in this direction.





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